

# AP U.S. History

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# Why a New Framework for AP U.S. History?

Previous course outline a mile wide and inch deep.

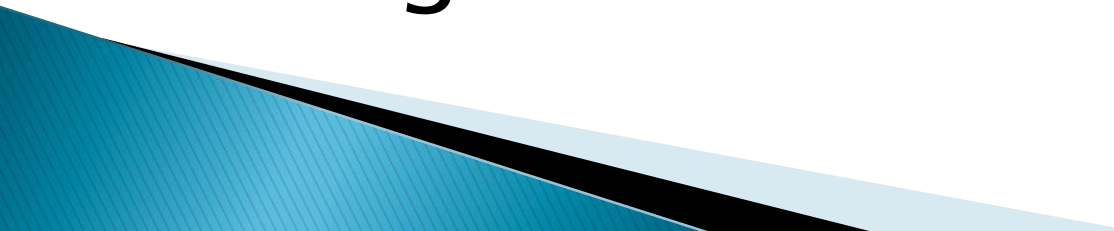
Total recall.



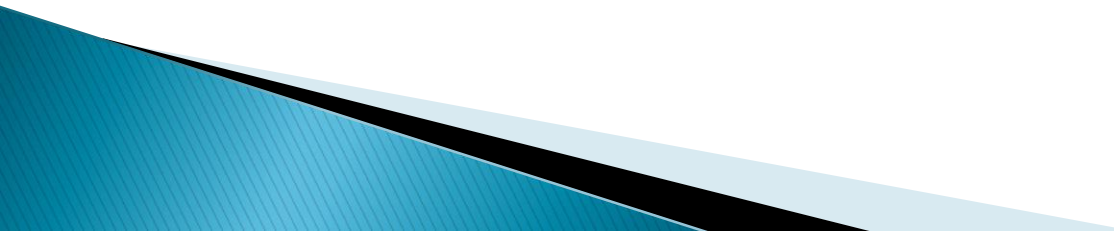
# College, Career, and Civic Life

Historical thinking skills are vital for college, career and civic life.

Most students will find themselves in a jury box or a voting booth.



# Historical thinking skills

- ▶ Chronological Reasoning
  - ▶ Comparing and Contextualizing
  - ▶ Crafting historical arguments using historical evidence
  - ▶ Interpreting and synthesizing historical narrative
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# Background

Advanced Placement courses were piloted in 1952 and the College Board has run the program since 1955.

AP United States History is offered in 86 schools in 36 districts or public charters.


Currently 5600 students take APUSH.  
33,000 take US History 2



# APUSH Course Framework

In 2007 the College Board began a revision, with an emphasis on college-level inquiry.

The framework allows teacher flexibility across nine periods in history to teach topics of their choice in depth.



# Nine Periods: 1491 to the Present



<i>Period</i>	<i>Date Range</i>	<i>Approximate Percentage of...</i>	
		<i>Instructional Time</i>	<i>AP Exam</i>
1	1491–1607	5%	5%
2	1607–1754	10%	45%
3	1754–1800	12%	
4	1800–1848	10%	
5	1844–1877	13%	
6	1865–1898	13%	45%
7	1890–1945	17%	
8	1945–1980	15%	
9	1980–Present	5%	5%

# The Framework

- ▶ The curriculum framework...is...a framework for presenting the essential skills and understandings that students should be able to demonstrate...It is not a detailed manual for how to teach the course.

- The AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework, p.9

# Historical thinking skills

“Good historical thinkers...know what it means to build and defend evidence-based arguments...they are informed, educated, thoughtful, critical readers, who...know good arguments when they hear them and who engage their world with a host of strategies for understanding it...Thomas Jefferson could hardly have wanted better citizens than these thinkers”

–Bruce VanSledright



**Key Change:** A new AP Exam design allows for better assessment of thematic understandings and use of historical thinking skills.

### **Current Exam**

Heavy emphasis on discrete multiple-choice questions focuses on mastery of content knowledge

- 80 multiple-choice questions:  
55 minutes
- 1 document-based question:  
60 minutes
- 2 free-response questions:  
70 minutes

### **Redesigned Exam (Spring 2015)**

By reducing the number of multiple-choice and adding short-answer questions, the exam now also assesses thematic understanding and application of historical thinking skills.

- 55 multiple-choice questions:  
55 minutes
- 4 short-answer questions:  
45 minutes
- 1 document-based question:  
60 minutes
- 1 long-essay question:  
35 minutes

**Key Change:** The long-essay question type on the AP Exam will remain essentially the same, although now only one will be required.

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## Current Exam

### Free-Response Question

Analyze the extent to which TWO of the following influenced the development of democracy between 1820 and 1840:

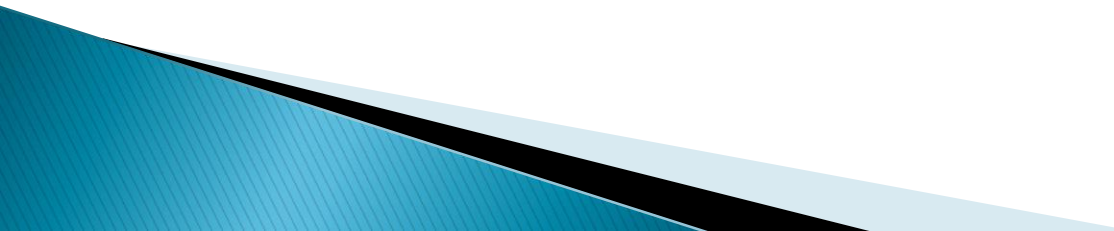
- *Jacksonian economic policy*
- *Changes in electoral policy*
- *Second Great Awakening*
- *Westward movement*

## Redesigned Exam (Spring 2015)

### Long-Essay Question

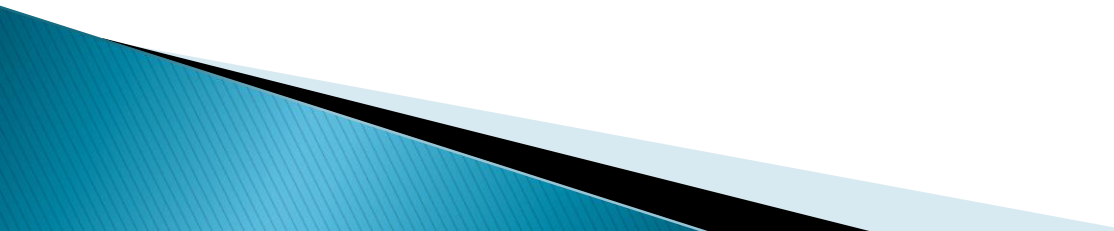
Some historians have argued that the American Revolution created a distinct political identity in the United States, transforming what it meant to be an American. Support, modify, or refute this contention using specific evidence.

# Themes

- ▶ Identity
  - ▶ Work, exchange, and technology
  - ▶ Peopling
  - ▶ Politics and Power
  - ▶ America in the world
  - ▶ Environment and geography – physical and human
  - ▶ Ideas, beliefs, and culture
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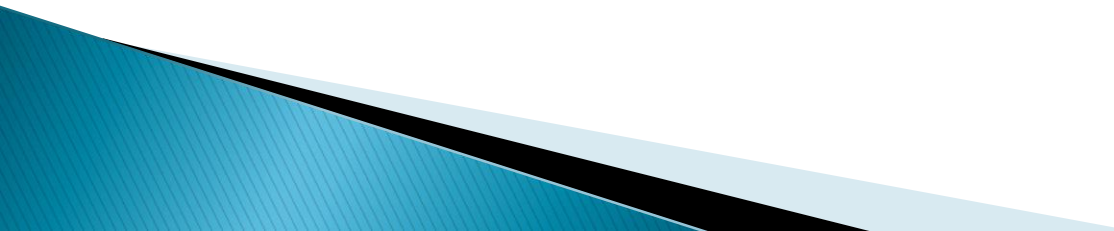
# Criticism

Recent criticism has two main points:

1. The framework does not cover certain topics.
  2. There is a political agenda in the framework.
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# College Board Response:

The Framework is a framework, with essential content to be added by teachers. It would be impossible to teach the Founding of this nation without the mentioning of George Washington.



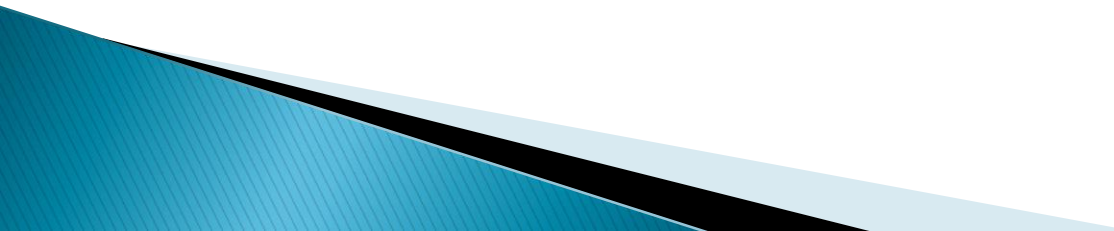
# College Board Response

- ▶ The College Board has released a full sample exam of the AP test.
  - The exam opens with an excerpt from *The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*. On this college-level exam, students will need to not only analyze George Washington's "Farewell Address" with care, but also articulate the influence of Washington's words on American foreign policy.

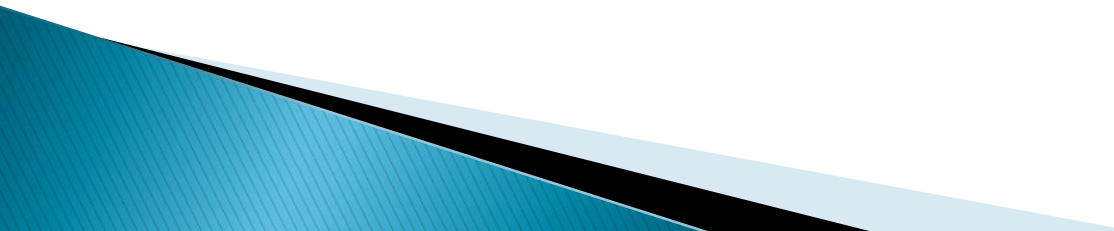
# Criticism

- ▶ Some critics feel there is too much emphasis on the limits of liberty and justice for all, rather than the successes.

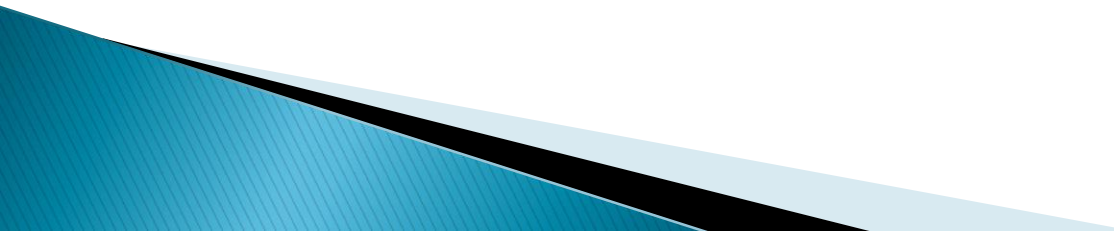
# College Board Response

- ▶ AP Curriculum Frameworks are developed by higher ed faculty and experienced AP teachers and validated by college department chairs.
  - ▶ College professors and AP teachers nationwide have confirmed the balance and appropriateness of the AP course.
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# Local Control

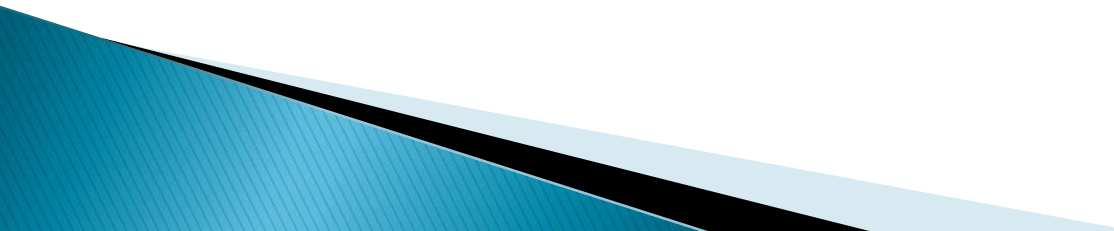
- ▶ AP courses are taught by local teachers from our communities.
  - ▶ They use textbooks and resources recommended by fellow teachers as part of the instructional materials review process.
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# Teaching American History

- ▶ One exceptional aspect of the American public education system is that here we do not tell students *what* to think.
  - ▶ We teach them *how* to think for themselves.
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# College, Career, and Civic Life

Our AP students are being prepared for the most important job they will ever have: that of being a citizen of this nation.



# US History 2

The high school course for the vast majority of Utah students is US History 2.

Historical thinking skills are expected of all students.

